

Annual Congregational Meeting – Sunday, January 31, on Zoom!

We will go ahead with our annual congregational meeting, but, like our worship services, the meeting will be held on Zoom. The meeting will be held after worship on Sunday, January 31. We'll hear reports from staff and committees, hear a presentation and approve an operating budget for 2021, and elect church council members for 2021. A copy of the proposed budget and the agenda will be mailed to all households the week prior to the meeting for you to review and have in front of you at the meeting. It will include the Zoom link to the worship service and meeting, which will also be included as always in the Saturday email on January 30. If you have any questions about how this will work, please don't hesitate to reach out to Pastor Susan, Deacon Phil, or Jenny Parker, our church council president.

ANNUAL MEETING

Reports for Annual Booklet



Even though we will not be able to distribute a booklet of reports at the annual meeting like we normally do, we will be making a booklet of reports for historical purposes. We will also make some copies available for those of you who would like to come by church and pick up a copy. As always, we would like to include reports for all committees and organizations in the congregation, detailing their ministries during the past year. This will be particularly interesting in the future as people look back to see what we did during the pandemic; so please take the time to write a report!

The deadline for submitting reports to Deacon Phil Holzman for the annual booklet is Friday, January 15.

If possible, please submit your report in a Microsoft Word file. Email to Phil at philh@gachurchmpls.org. Questions? Contact Deacon Phil by email or phone before the deadline.

2021 Offering Envelopes Have Arrived

Thank you to those folks who have already picked up their envelopes. We still have a good number of envelope boxes waiting to be picked up at church. You have one more opportunity to pick them up before we begin mailing them out; you can come to church on Wednesday, January 13, between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. and pick up your envelopes.



Sunday Zoom Worship – 9:30 a.m. Every Sunday

See the Saturday email each week for Zoom invitation link, or contact Deacon Phil Holzman for call-in information. If you don't receive the Saturday email and would like to be included, contact Deacon Phil as well.

Transition Musings
Interim Pastor Susan Masters
January 2021

Friends, did you imagine back in March when we paused worship for “a few weeks” that we would still be apart nine months later? I certainly had no idea. And what a nine months it has been. What a YEAR it has been.

Here at GA, over the past year, we have learned some important lessons about how important it is to be able physically to be together, but also that our being church is not defined by such gatherings. We’ve not all been in the same space for nine months, and yet we are no less church today than we were back in March.

And we have all become much more adept at technology than we ever imagined possible. I was so worried that we would not all master Zoom – and then, the least Zoom-y among us figured it out and regularly join us every Sunday for worship. (When I am with my colleagues, I actually brag on how technologically sophisticated you all are. Well done!)

Probably most important, we have learned the depths of our relational commitments to one another - that even a pandemic of global proportions that has completely up-ended our world is no match for the love that we share for one another....

And in addition to the obvious devastation of the coronavirus, which as of this writing, has claimed over 352,000 lives in the United States alone, this year our country has experienced a long overdue awakening around the ugly and very real legacy of racial injustice, one not confined to our history books but very much alive and well today.

And all of this is playing out against the backdrop of an election that just cannot seem to come to a peaceful – or even just a reasonable – conclusion....

An outsider might wonder why we even bother. Why even continue to keep doing this thing we call church. Because Lord knows it would not be that hard to just put it down, let it die a natural death, and find something else to do with our time and energies and money. We are, after all, a congregation in transition, discerning what our future looks like. What if we just said: “It’s time to pull the plug and walk away”?

But, of course, we are not going to do that! We couldn’t even if we wanted to. Because here at GA, we are a scrappy little urban congregation that answers to something - someONE – bigger than we are, who calls us outside of ourselves and into something bigger than us. And let’s be clear, there is nothing logical about that calling. The world watches and wonders if we’re crazy.

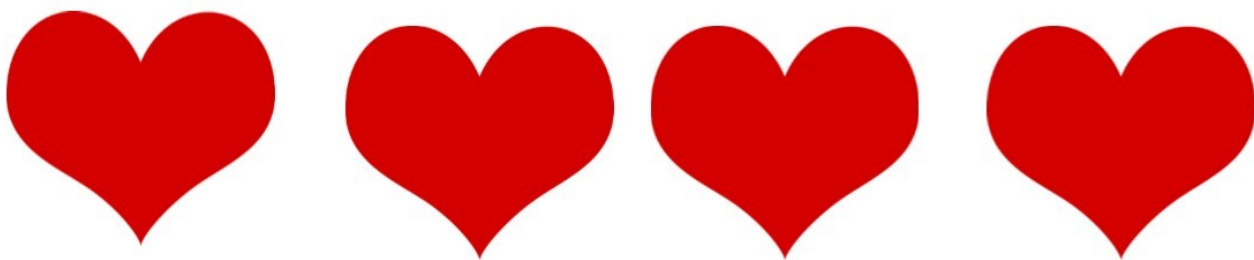
And the answer is: Yes we are! Because in a time of global pandemic when our world is in lockdown, we cling more than ever to the practice of community. When our world is reeling from the sucker punch of racial injustice, we dare to proclaim God’s assumption of justice for all people. And at a time when our world has seldom felt more divided, we are bold to believe in the capacity for reconciliation. Friends, whatever 2021 brings, we will continue to move forward as a community of faith, in a time of transition, discerning how God wants to use us in the world. Of the events swirling around us, however dreadful they may be, will change that.

Early in January, I will launch our **Transition Team**, which includes **Jenny Arneson, Gary Anderson, Lynn Lurvey, Aaron Miller, Hannah Rosebrock, and Aaron Olson**. This team will help us move through the next phase of our transition work to prepare you to call your new settled pastor later this year. We will begin that work by unpacking the findings presented in the State of the Interim report I shared with you in September. (If you need another copy of that report, please contact the office.) From there, we will prioritize the concerns most pertinent to the call process and get to work on them.

I go into this new year feeling both apprehensive about how the events of 2020 will continue to affect world and our mission at Gustavus Adolphus, and also hopeful - excited, even - about the work ahead of us and what it all potentially means for what God is up to among us.

As with all things, please do not hesitate to let me know how you are doing, what your thoughts are about this transition time of transition, and how I can best pastorally serve you.

It is my honor to serve as your interim pastor.



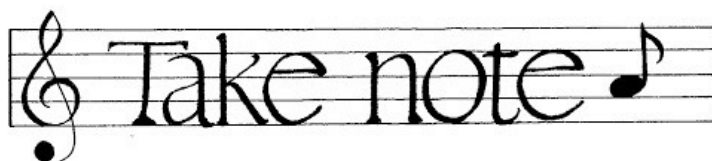
Join us in decorating GA with hearts during the month of February!

Our windows looked so pretty during Advent that we are going to keep spreading the joy!

Mail or drop off hearts at church so we can hang them up in the windows and display our love to the neighborhood through February.

Furlough Fund Money Available

GA's Furlough Fund is still available to provide monetary assistance to help members/associate members who are in financial need due to circumstances related to the Covid-19 pandemic (you do not necessarily need to be furloughed). Members/associate members can apply for a grant of \$250.00. This gift does not need to be paid back. If you or a member/associate member are in need of this, please contact the church office. Your request is confidential.





There are ways you can stay connected to your GA family during this time when we are not able to gather in person. The activities listed on this page can help you do just that. If you have any questions about any of these activities or ministries, contact the person leading that particular ministry or contact Pastor Susan or Deacon Phil (their contact information is listed on the back page of this newsletter).

Quilters to Meet January 7

The Quilters will meet on Thursday, January 7 – 9:30 a.m. to 12 noon. **Don't forget your mask!**

Virtual GA Choristers Meeting – Wednesday, January 20



Deacon Phil invites all our young people in elementary and middle school to meet with him on Zoom for a 20-minute Virtual GA Choristers session once a month. This month's session will be Wednesday, January 20, at 6:30 p.m. All are welcome to come and sing some familiar songs and enjoy some musical fun together. A Zoom invitation will be sent in the Saturday email the week before, but the Zoom ID Meeting ID is 846 0004 5238... with the familiar passcode of 1509.

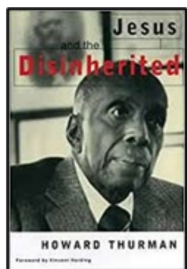
Did you know that our adult choirs meet for choir chat every Wednesday night? They don't sing on Zoom, but they enjoy a time of fellowship and chat to stay connected with one another during this time of separation.

Join Zoom Storytime this Winter!

Let's stay connected and engaged in our community through a regular virtual family storytime for youth or those young at heart. We will have stories read live on at 9:00 a.m. January 10, 17, 24, and 31. Also, there will be a replay of stories posted on the GA Facebook page in case you aren't able to make it live. Watch the Saturday email blast for the Zoom link to join in. Hope to see you!



Monday Night Book Club Meets on February 8 via Zoom (No Meeting in January)



Join us on Monday, February 8, via Zoom to discuss Howard Thurman's *Jesus and the Disinherited*. In this book, Thurman explores how the teachings of Christ serve as a framework of resistance to the poor and disinherited. This book greatly influenced the work of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. – an important read! Our Zoom meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m., and we will discuss the entirety of the book. See below for the Zoom Meeting ID. Questions? Email Andrea Carter at andreaLcart@gmail.com. All are welcome! Zoom Meeting ID: 833 6867 8053.

January Collection of Winter Weather Gear

It's time for our annual collection of hats, mittens/gloves, and scarves to be donated to local school children. The Congregational Life Committee invites you to bring donations of NEW or hand-made items to church on Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. or drop them through the mail slot during the month of January. This collection of items has been a long tradition here at GA. Let's not let the pandemic stop us from helping local children in need of winter weather gear!



Greetings from Our Deacon in This Continuing Pandemic

We have just come through a most unusual Advent and Christmas season. No matter what our situation is, I'm sure I'm safe in saying that each of our holiday observances this year was different than in the past due to the pandemic. I know mine was. I missed making music with the choirs so much – just to name one thing. Thanks be to God for Zoom and technology, though, that allowed us to share a wonderful Christmas Eve service together. I want to thank everyone who helped make that service happen, especially our quartet of singers – Nicole, Carlotta, Joel, and Derrick – for making the music of Christmas come alive that night.

Once again, I want to remind you to look on our Facebook page each Wednesday when I post some organ music. Each Wednesday, my trip to the GA office includes a recording session of about ten minutes of organ music that I post on my personal Facebook page and on the GA Facebook page. During the Epiphany season, I will share a "Noel" each week plus some Epiphany carols as we work our way toward the beginning of Lent. (Ash Wednesday is February 17.) I continue to be grateful for the many encouraging messages that I receive about the music that I'm providing; I am glad that so many of you are finding the music to be meaningful and helpful.

New Year's blessings to all of you as we continue to find our way through this challenging time!

Deacon Phil Holzman

philh@gachurchmpls.org

612-789-7256, ext. 11 (leave a voice message)

320-304-1774 (cell phone/send a text message)



From the Racial Justice Committee



Thank you for showing your support to the African American community by displaying your window signs and making donations. We raised \$100 which was delivered to the Minnesota African American Heritage Gallery and Museum whose "purpose is to preserve, record and highlight the achievements, contributions and experiences of African Americans in Minnesota." Check out their current new virtual exhibits at <https://www.maahmg.org> including the following:

- Magical Black History Trees by Alicia Smiley (<https://youtu.be/05teFtPs3pk>)
- "Gather in his name: From Protests to Healing for George Floyd" by John Steitz (<https://bit.ly/38cRxUw>)
- Facebook Storytelling with Local Author Timi Bliss: In Search of the Gingerbread Man (<https://fb.watch/2P8kGhnUwi/>)

All Are Welcome...Our Mission Statement

Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church proclaims that the Gospel is God's gift to all people, to be shared unconditionally. We rejoice in the manner in which diversity has enriched, nurtured and challenged the life and ministry we share in Christ. We know that the world is often an unloving place and that the experience of alienation is all too common. Because Christ reconciles us, we welcome people of all ages, ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender identities, physical and mental abilities, educational levels, and socioeconomic backgrounds. We strive to be an evermore welcoming community. Following the example of Christ, we extend a most heartfelt welcome to all.

Monthly Financial Report

	November 2020 Actual	November 2020 YTD	November 2019 YTD
Income	\$21,389.89	\$285,031.41	\$288,773.46
Expenses	<u>\$22,795.56</u>	<u>\$245,236.55</u>	<u>\$307,913.27</u>
Inc-Exp	<\$ 1,405.67>	\$ 39,794.86	<\$ 19,139.81>

Thank you for your generosity in November! While our giving fell short of spending by \$1,405.67, the PPP loan cushion continues to support GA's finances (see Nov. 2020 YTD above). Our bank, TCF, has requested that we wait awhile longer to apply for PPP loan forgiveness. They are revising the forgiveness application to follow measures recently approved by the COVID-19 Relief Act. The forgiveness application should be easier to complete. Welcomed good news!

Another Furlough Fund application was approved in December for a total of two approved applications in 2020. Furlough Fund money is still available to those who need financial assistance. Lastly, Finance and Council continue to make edits to the 2021 budget. Please join us at the Annual Meeting on January 31 to learn more about next year's budget.

Next Finance Meeting via Zoom: Thursday, January 14, at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Carter
Treasurer

Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church

A Reconciling in Christ Congregation

Church Phone: 612-789-7256

Sunday Zoom Worship at 9:30 a.m.

Church Staff ...

The Rev. Susan Masters, Interim Pastor (Ext. 10)
pastorsusan@gachurchmpls.org
Cell phone (for pastoral emergencies): 612-327-7454

Deacon Phil Holzman, Minister of Word & Service (Ext. 11)
(Worship & Music, Parish Administration)
philh@gachurchmpls.org
Cell phone (for texts/calls): 320-304-1774

Zach Copa & Dan Hager, Finance Managers (Ext. 14)
danh@gachurchmpls.org
zachc@gachurchmpls.org

Joel Lurvey, Contemporary Choir Director
joel.lurvey@gmail.com

Linda Lindahl, Church Custodian



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Ways You Can Give to GA During This Time When We Are Apart



1) Mail your offering to GA:
1509 27th Avenue NE
Minneapolis, MN 55418

2) Give electronically at our website,
www.gachurchmpls.org. Just click on the
"Donate" button on any page.

3) Sign up to give electronically through our
"Simply Giving" program. Email GA's Finance
Manager, Zach Copa, for details. Zach can also
help you if you are interested in learning how to
contribute stock donations.

Gustavus Adolphus Church Council

Jenny Parker, President
Sarah Larson, Vice-President
Cindy Bach, Secretary
Andrea Carter, Treasurer
James Hamilton
Dee Kjera
Ed Huble
Erik Peterson